

TIME PLACE & MANNER

THE STUDENTS' ALTERNATIVE NEWS OUTLET

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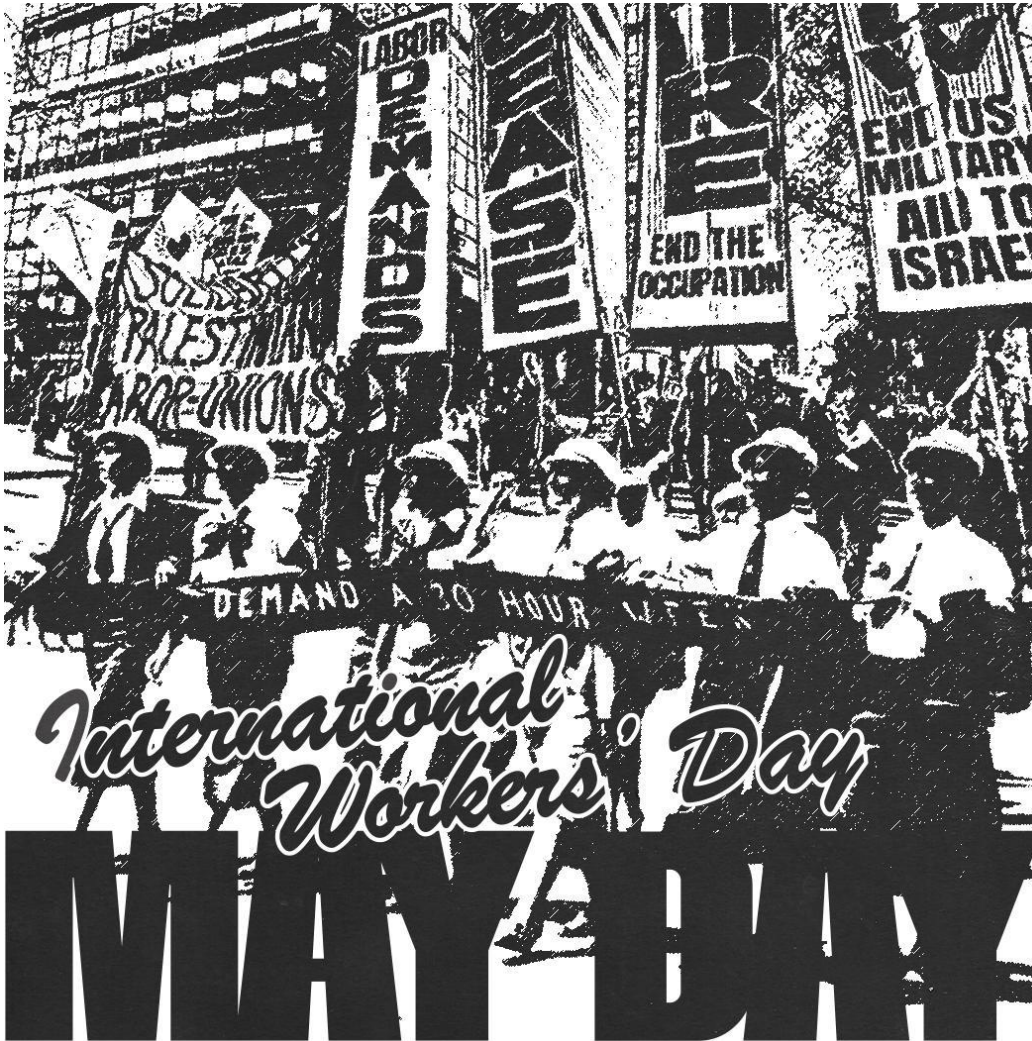
A UNIVERSITY FOR US ALL

A FSCME (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees) Local 3299 is the University of California's largest employee union, representing more than 37,000 service workers. This includes Patient Care technical workers, skilled craft workers, and more at UC's campuses, medical centers, and labs.

Every student on this campus benefits from the labor of these workers on a daily basis. The UC rests on the bedrock of these 37,000 employees. They keep our environment pleasant and germ-free, feed thousands of students in the dining halls and eateries, and do the daily tasks that keep our world-famous medical centers and labs running. None of what makes the University of California possible could happen without them.

And yet, most of these workers are barely scraping by on the hourly wage the university pays them. Not only has the university refused to raise wages to sufficiently keep up with inflation, but custodians report working extra hours to make up for understaffing, only to be rewarded with a denial of overtime pay.

The separation between UC students and workers is so porous as to be almost fictitious. Many students work part- or even full-time to pay bills; some work alongside non-student workers in the dining halls and behind the counters of the same buildings. And none of us will be students forever. Most of us will soon enter the workforce, where we will experience the inherent power imbalance of most employment. Contrary to dominant theories of economics, workers do not act as perfectly rational and free agents. Employers can exercise power in ways that their



FROM THE UNIONS IN PALESTINE

May 1st is an important day for workers and unions across the world. On this occasion, we wanted to republish an excerpt from a letter from the Palestinian labor movement to American workers and allies.

Instead of celebrating with you on May 1st, International Workers Day, we are busy shrouding dozens of people who are being killed around the clock in the middle of a genocidal war against our people – in every sense of that word.

We call on you to be our voice and advocate inside and outside America. What our people are experiencing and what workers and unions

in particular, are exposed to is the most horrific catastrophe known to humanity in recent decades. We ask that you convey our message and give voice to the suffering of hungry, starving workers and their families—not just to the American people, not just to your unions, but to the entire world.

We are a people enduring bombardment, hunger, disease, and all forms of suffering,

but we are determined to live, to stand firm, and to rebuild from this destruction with our blood and many sacrifices.

Thank you for your efforts, and happy new year on International Workers Day. We will certainly carry the banner of victory despite the killing and destruction.

Courtesy of Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions

MORE ON BACK SIDE

NOTES FROM A CUSTODIAN

Republished is part of an interview of a UC Berkeley Custodian, Cynthia, who we've met during the campus worker strikes this year. Cynthia is also a Palestine activist who traveled to DC with her union to protest Biden's support of the genocide.

Q: Why should workers and students be united?

CYNTHIA: We workers understand that the students can push the university the hardest. It's the students' tuition that pays for management's luxurious lifestyle. It's very easy for higher-ups to discard workers as mere cleaners, but they view students very differently. It's very essential to connect worker and student struggles. At the root, it's students and workers who make up the university – without us, it is nothing.

Q: Last year, you went with your union (AFSCME 3299) to protest Biden's State of the Union address in DC over his support for Israel's genocide. Tell us about that!

CYNTHIA: These are memories – I almost went to jail! I was lucky enough to go with

my union to DC and stand off against police officers threatening arrests. It feels great to fight for such a just cause and to be connected with other activists who are upset over our taxes going to kill innocents abroad.

I can't help but feel an incredible amount of frustration at the fact that decisions made by uninformed people here result in people being killed abroad. This also connects to decisions made here by the bosses on who gets to eat.

Students are the future and should never stop raising their voices for what they think is just. I will be with you no matter what.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

employees individually cannot.

Does it make you feel comfortable to be served by people who are denied agency? Isn't it dehumanizing for ourselves to have an artificial barrier maintained between ourselves and people with whom we interact every day?

As students, we are encouraged to consider ourselves consumers of the educational product manufactured by the university. In this framework, non-student, non-teaching workers make up the background into which our professors and administrators step. We should instead consider ourselves as part of a system in which we actually create our education and contribute to the institution we inhabit. In other words: this is a community. Non-student workers are equal parts of this community, people who deserve no less consideration—no less of the luxury of thinking, of being provided for—than you or I.

The University of California prides itself on being an engine of social mobility. Its websites tout its 28% community-college transfer rate, and it's a genuine accomplishment that the UC enrolls and graduates low-income students at the same or higher rate as their peers. According to a February 2019 report, 93% of low-income students went on to earn more than their parents. Our institution

is vocal about these statistics because it purports to be a force for social good.

But universities are not just for students. I don't want to participate in an institution that treats its workers—its community members—as second-class. Furthermore, our university teaches us values outside of classrooms. Is that an ideal with which we can be proud of imbuing our education?

So I encourage us all to be true parts of our community, support workers and amplify their voices. Show the university that you support a fair wage for those who help your school run. Talk to your fellow community members; don't treat them as background scenery. Let's make this a university for us all.

TAKE ACTION

Saturday, May 3 & Sunday, May 4
12:00-4:00 PM at 8th & Harrison Streets

Biweekly Community-Led Clean Up & Mural Day

Stop the sweeps! See more @ berkeley.homeless.union

Monday, May 5
7:30-10:00 PM at 2422 Ridge Road
SOL Movie Monday: "On Strike!"

Wednesday, May 7
12:30-2:00 PM in Disability Cultural Center

[Teach-in & Discussion] From Berkeley to Gaza: Disability Justice with No Tools

RSVP at tinyurl.com/May7DJ

KNOW YOUR WORKPLACE RIGHTS

Have you ever been told not to take a lunch break, worked late without compensation, been verbally harassed by your boss/manager, or had your tips confiscated? These violations, though commonly faced by student workers, are all illegal. Young workers - along with workers of color, women, and noncitizens - face disproportionate levels of wage theft, with minimum wage and overtime violations accounting for billions of dollars in stolen wages each year. Students often accept workplace violations, feeling a lack of power in their workplace or fearing retaliation. But holding businesses accountable is crucial in setting expectations for fair pay and treatment. As a California worker, you are automatically entitled to overtime pay, meal and rest breaks, local minimum wage, family and medical leave, workplace safety and privacy, sick leave, and protection from sexual harass-

ment, discrimination, workplace retaliation, and wrongful termination. If you believe your rights are being violated, visit <https://legallaidatwork.org/> for free legal aid, professional helplines, and workplace rights guides. You can also report labor violations to the California Labor Commissioner's Office or the California Civil Rights Department (<https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/>).

The best way to build worker power is to unionize your workplace. A strong, democratic union can negotiate living wages and better conditions, monitor workplace safety, and protect workers from retaliation and labor violations. Yet as of 2024, just over 11% of all US workers were unionized. Among workers aged 16 - 24, this number drops to the lowest of any age category, with a 4.3% union membership rate. Deya, a local BCC student who helped organize the first Peet's Labor Union in

2023, was inspired to unionize because "the workplace is where the wealth of the capitalists is created by workers - so it is only in that arena that workers can stop profits and shift the balance of power away from the capitalists".

Organized workers have immense power to disrupt systems of exploitation and imperialism. This April, the Union of Port Workers in Morocco called on its members to refuse to service a Maersk cargo ship containing US military equipment bound for Israeli-occupied Palestine, calling for a "people's arms embargo" and successfully delaying the ship on its route to genocide. This solidarity reflects an acknowledgement of the shared struggles between workers and oppressed peoples worldwide. United we bargain, divided we beg. To learn more about the steps of starting a union or speak directly with a union organizer, visit <https://workerorganizing.org/>.

"RAISE HELL AND DUCK"

WANT TO JOIN



We are a student-led group of campus-community members organizing to resist UC Berkeley's and the UC's imperialist, Zionist, and oppressive projects.

DM @ucb.sol on Instagram to get involved.